
24th FEBRUARY, 1804.

Read the first and second time, and ordered to be committed to a committee of the whole House, on Monday next.

A B I L L

To authorise the District Court, for the District of Columbia, to decree Divorces in certain cases.

1 **Be it enacted**, by the Senate and House of Representatives
2 of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That
3 the circuit court for the district of Columbia, shall have jurisdic-
4 tion as a court of chancery, in causes of divorce, allowed and di-
5 rected by this act: *Provided*, the party applying for a divorce,
6 shall be an inhabitant of said district and shall have resided there-
7 in for three years next, preceding his or her applying for the same.

1 SECT. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the like process and pro-
2 cedure, shall be had and pursued in causes of divorce, as are had
3 and pursued in other causes on the equity side of the said court,
4 except that the answer of defendants shall not be under oath.

1 SECT. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That divorces from the
 2 bonds of matrimony, shall be decreed for the following causes,
 3 to wit, adultery, voluntary desertion for three years, or personal
 4 cruelty and ill usage; which said causes or some of them, shall
 5 be alledged by the party complaining, and fully proved against
 6 the party complained of; but the decree or sentence of divorce
 7 shall not render illegitimate the issue theretofore born.

1 SECT. 4. *And be it further enacted,* That when a divorce shall be
 2 decreed, the court may take such order, relating to the care and main-
 3 tenance of the children of the marriage, and also touching the main-
 4 tenance of the wife, or any allowance to be made to her, and the
 5 security to be given if any, as from the circumstances of the par-
 6 ties and the nature of the case, may be equitable and just.